

Here is the text of the letter I have sent to my congressmen. I strongly urge you at the FCC to view this with an open mind and to not stifle the freedom of choice that we cherish in this country.

Dear Sir,

I am writing this to urge you to strongly oppose bill:

H.R. 4026

? To preserve local radio broadcast emergency and other services and to require the Federal Communications Commission to conduct a rulemaking for that purpose.?

Mr. PICKERING (for himself and Mr. GREEN of Texas) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce on March 24th, 2004.

The viability of satellite radio is dependent on being able to offer both national and local programming. The national programming that is provided gives the consumer choices they might not have locally. For instance, the availability of clear Christian programming at my house in Wake Forest is non-existent. There are several stations in the Raleigh area but due to broadcast and power limitations, they do not come in clear. On my satellite radio, not only is the programming clear, but also there are more choices in Christian programming. Thus as a consumer, I have chosen to subscribe to Satellite radio. The local programming available, although not available in Raleigh at this time, is limited to traffic and weather right now. This is very timely and informative service to be offered. Why should I as a consumer have to switch away from my satellite radio to hear traffic and weather, when it can be made available to me over the satellite? In my mind the reason is to protect the coffers of the local radio stations. Local radio for years has been unwilling to provide Christian formats solely on the basis that they do not bring in enough money. So why then should my Satellite provider not be able to provide both. This is a Free Market economy and I believe that I should be able to spend my money and the radio service that provides the formats I want to listen to as well as the local information I need.

The gentlemen in proposing this bill make the suggestion that if Satellite radio is allowed to carry local programming, then the emergency response of the citizens is hampered in some way. This is not true. All the FCC would have to do, is regulate the local portions just like they do the terrestrial stations now. If an emergency broadcast is required, then the local programming options should be preempted, just like the current radio stations are now. In fact, if this is implemented, the emergency broadcasts would reach more people as the reception of Satellite radio is available in more places than current terrestrial stations. Places like valleys and steep shadowed sides of mountains. So, sir, this argument makes no sense to me. Allowing Satellite radio to carry local programming that can be preempted by emergency broadcasts, better serves an area.

In closing, I strongly urge you to oppose H.R. 4206